

SULTANA RAZIA

Intelligent, brave, competent and just, Razia was chosen by her father, Sultan Iltutmish, to succeed him to the throne of Delhi. The people loved her and trusted her but the Amirs or nobles found it difficult to swear loyalty to a woman. Sultana Razia ruled for only three and a half years but she proved her father right by being a wise and just ruler who protected and nurtured her subjects. She led her armies and was a brave soldier. Her only enemy were the times that did not accept a woman as a leader.

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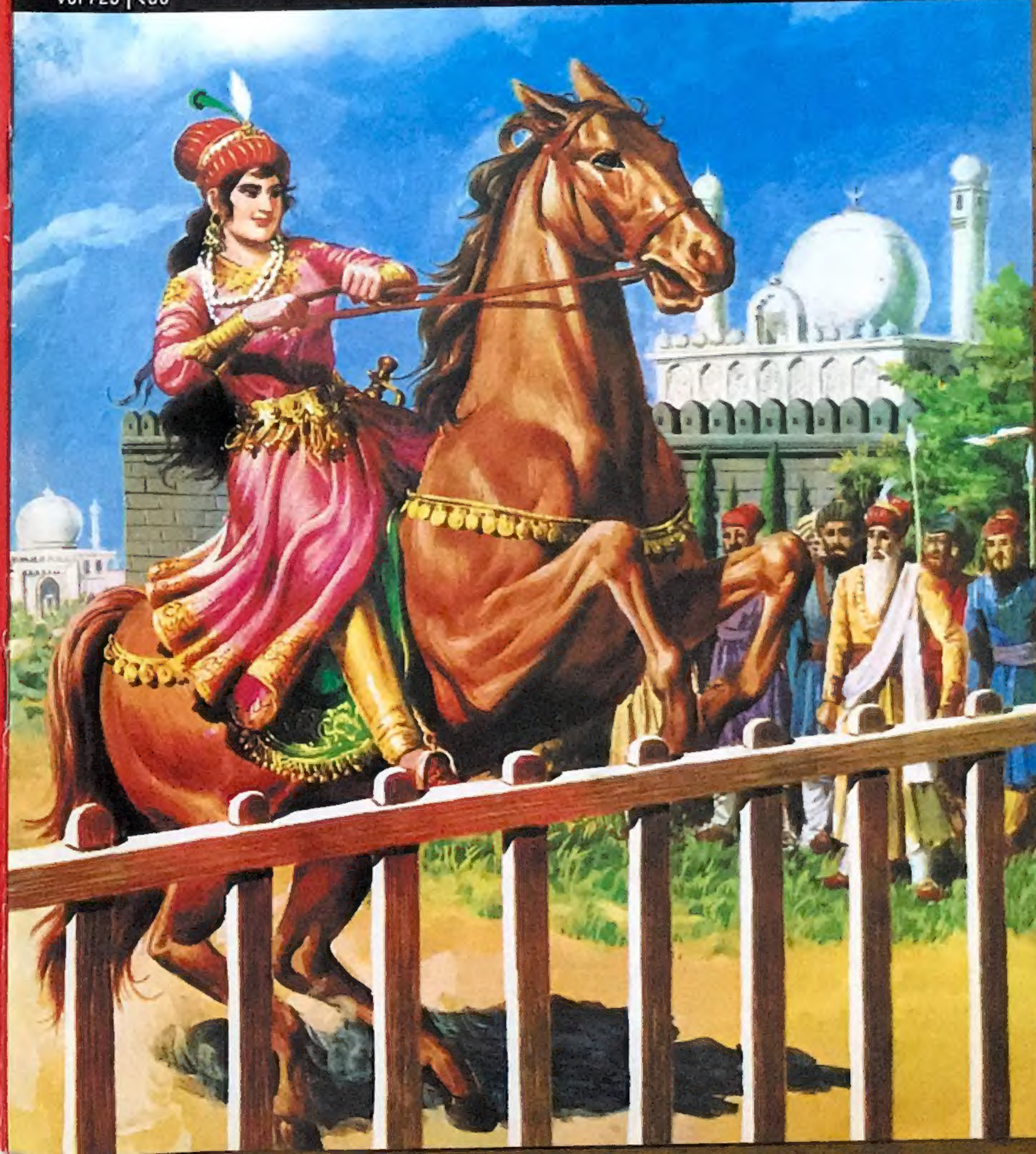
BRAVEHEARTS



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SULTANA RAZIA



SULTANA RAZIA WAS THE ONLY REIGNING QUEEN WHO EVER SAT ON THE THRONE OF DELHI. SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF SULTAN SHAMSUDDIN ILTUTMISH OF THE SLAVE DYNASTY.

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IN 1236, SULTAN ILTUTMISH RETURNED TO DELHI WITH HIS VICTORIOUS TROOPS AFTER CRUSHING A REBELLION IN SIND.



WELCOME HOME, MY LORD. I TRUST ALL WENT WELL.

VICTORY WAS OURS. BUT IT WAS A TIRING CAMPAIGN.



IT MUST HAVE BEEN. YOU LOOK ILL, MY LORD! LET ME SUMMON THE DOCTOR.

LATER, SHAH TURKAN. THERE ARE MORE PRESSING MATTERS THAT NEED ATTENTION. SEND FOR TAJUDDIN.

TAJUDDIN WAS HIS TRUSTED MINISTER.

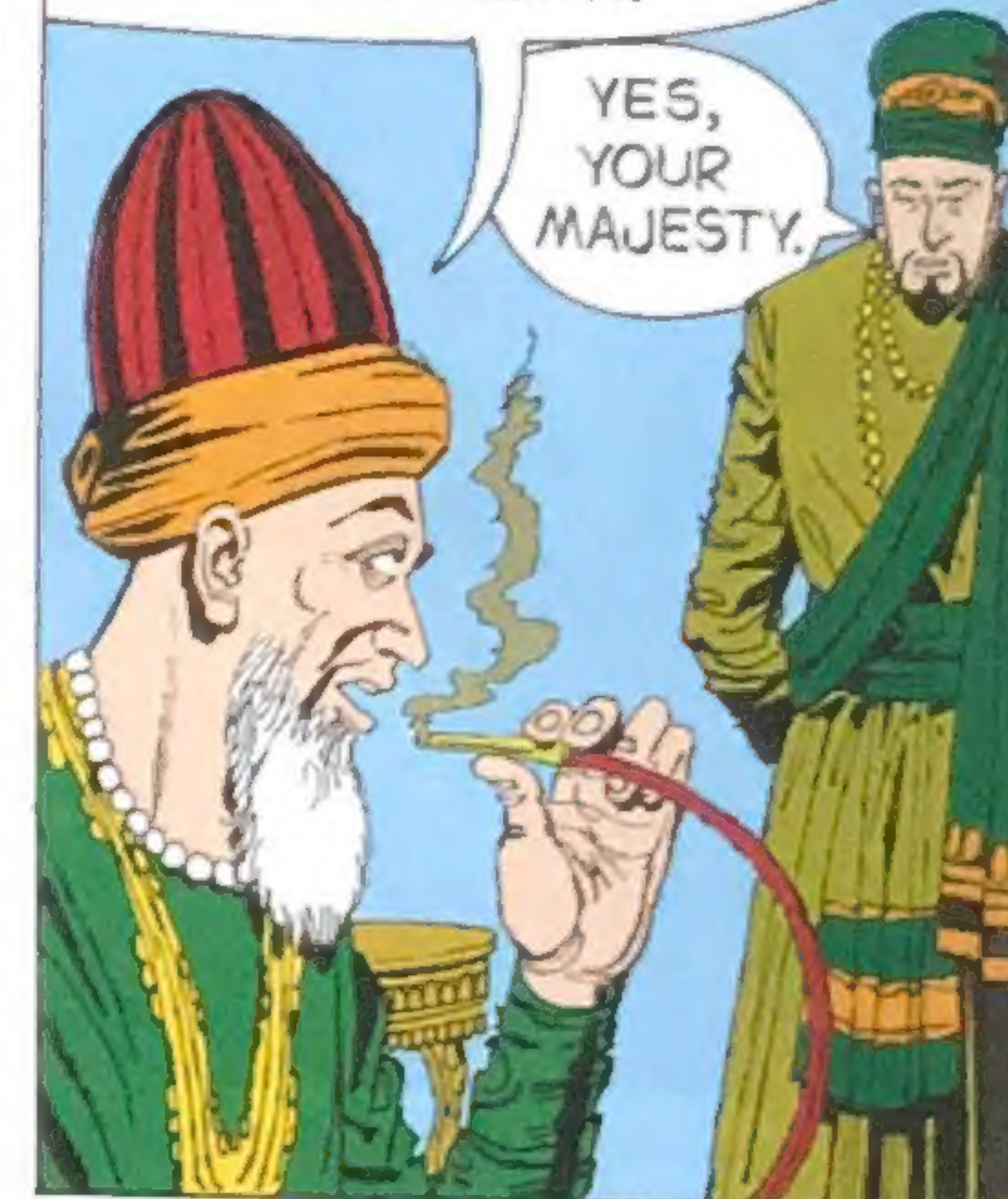


TAJUDDIN, I HAVE DECIDED TO MAKE RAZIA, MY SUCCESSOR.



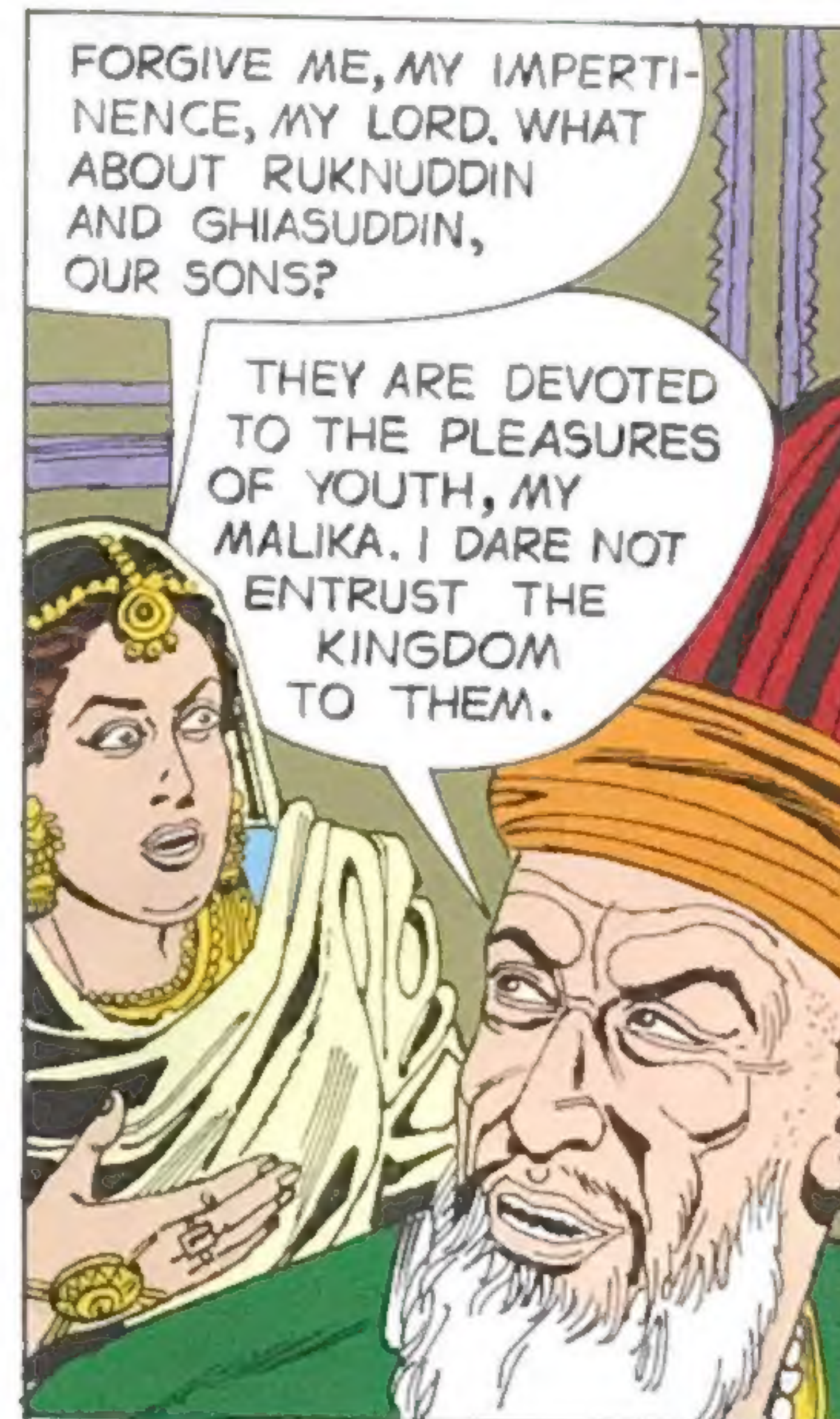
MAKE A WILL BUT KEEP ITS CONTENTS A SECRET. READ IT TO THE DURBAR ONLY AFTER MY DEATH.

YES, YOUR MAJESTY.



FORGIVE ME, MY IMPERTINENCE, MY LORD. WHAT ABOUT RUKNUDDIN AND GHIASUDDIN, OUR SONS?

THEY ARE DEVOTED TO THE PLEASURES OF YOUTH, MY MALIKA. I DARE NOT ENTRUST THE KINGDOM TO THEM.



ON APRIL 29, 1236, ILTUTMISH, THE GREATEST OF THE SLAVE KINGS, DIED.



AFTER THE FUNERAL, TAJUDDIN SUMMONED THE FORTY AMIRS *AND READ OUT THE SULTAN'S WILL.



THE NIZAM-UL-MULK** WAS THE FIRST TO VOICE THE FEELINGS OF THE ANGRY AMIRS.

HOW COULD HIS MAJESTY DO SUCH A THING?



* POWERFUL TURKISH NOBLES

HOW CAN WE SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO A WOMAN?

THE PRINCESS MAY PROVE TO BE AN EFFICIENT RULER, AYAZ. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT AN EXCELLENT ADMINISTRATOR SHE MADE WHEN THE SULTAN WAS AWAY AT GWALIOR?



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** PRIME MINISTER

AMIR ALTUNIA, WE KNOW YOU ARE FOND OF THE PRINCESS. BUT...



MY GOOD FRIENDS, PLEASE STOP QUARRELLING. I UNDERSTAND YOUR PREJUDICE AGAINST MY SEX. THEREFORE, LET US ALL SWEAR ALLEGIANCE TO MY BROTHER, RUKNUDDIN.

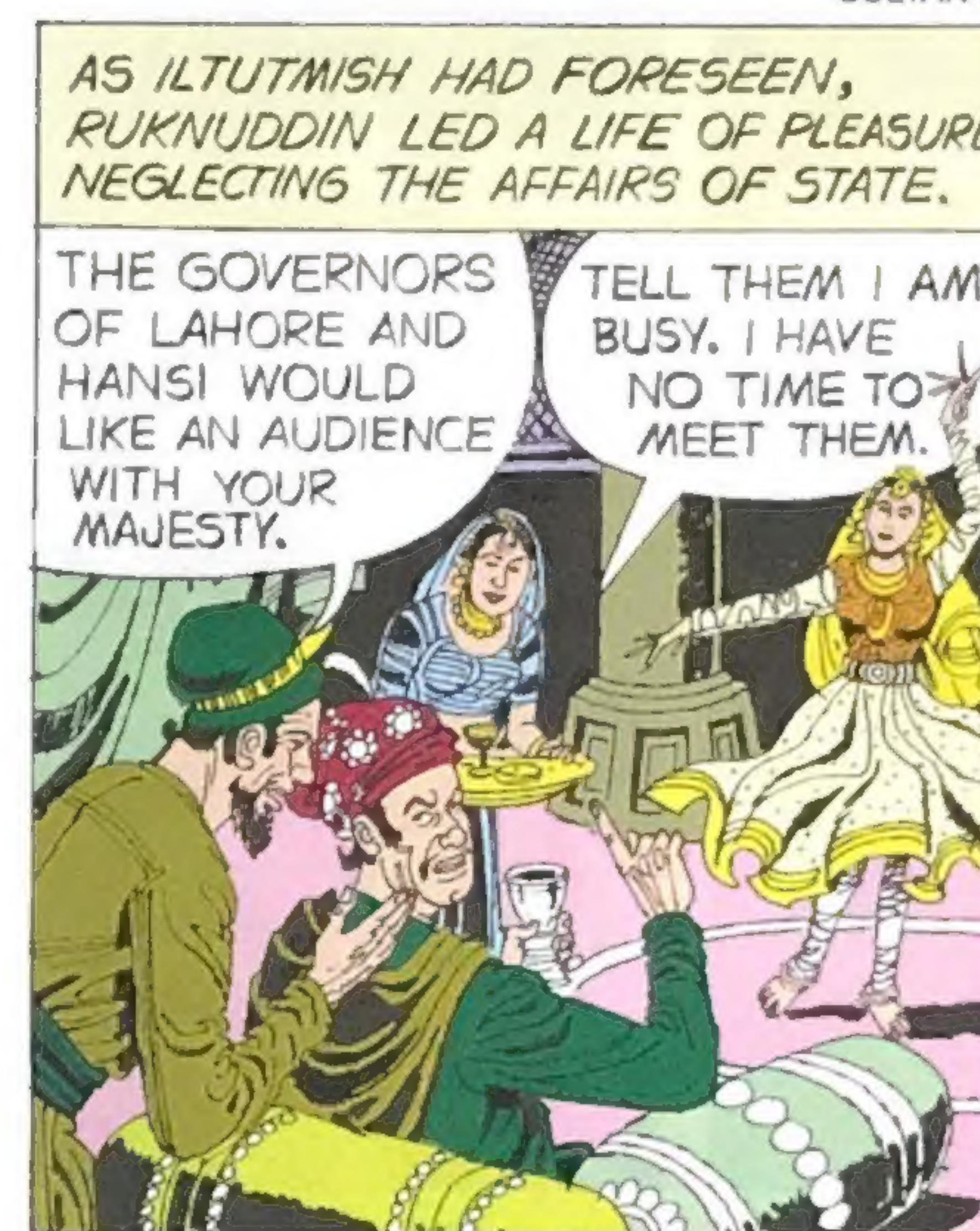
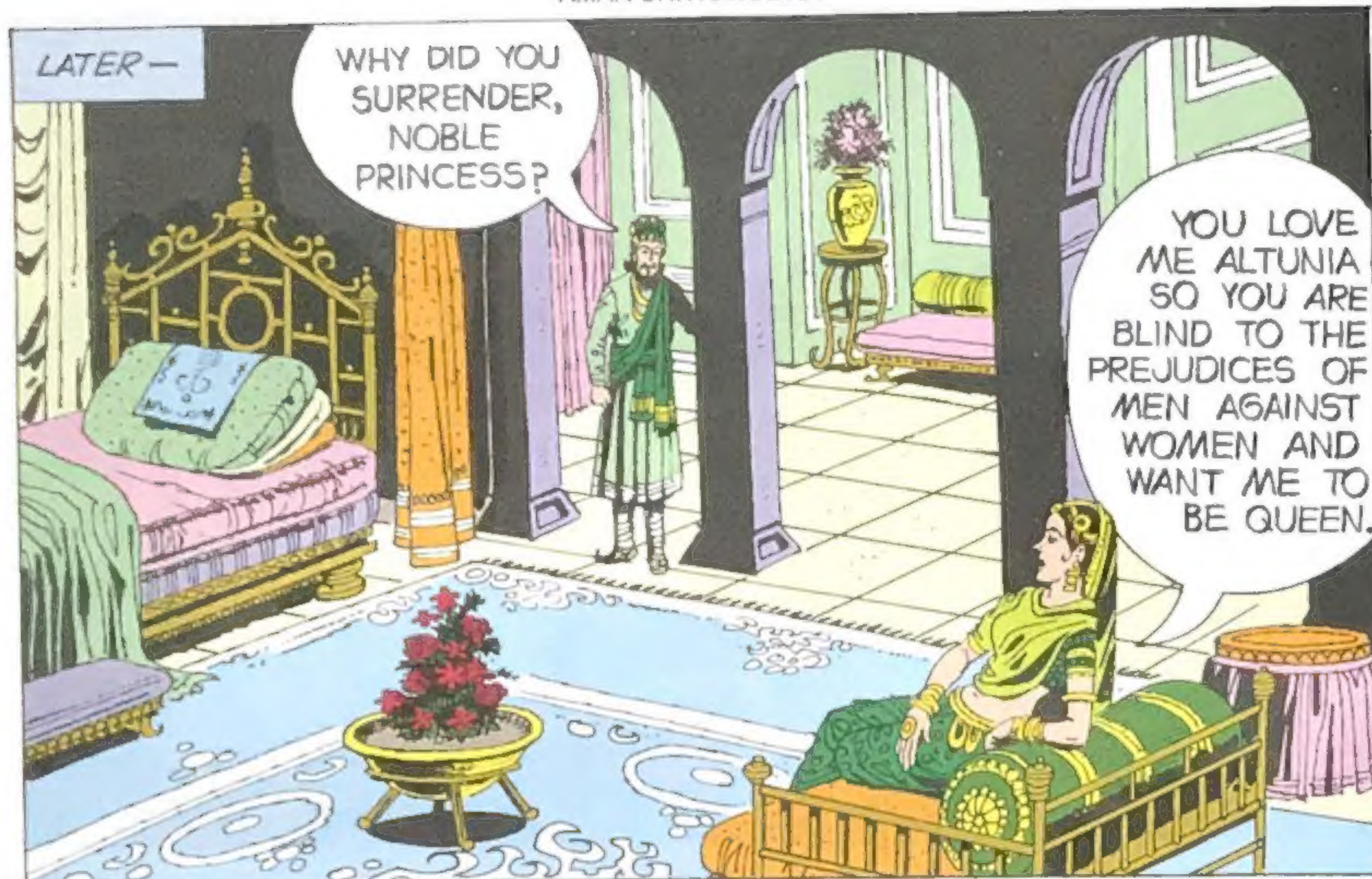


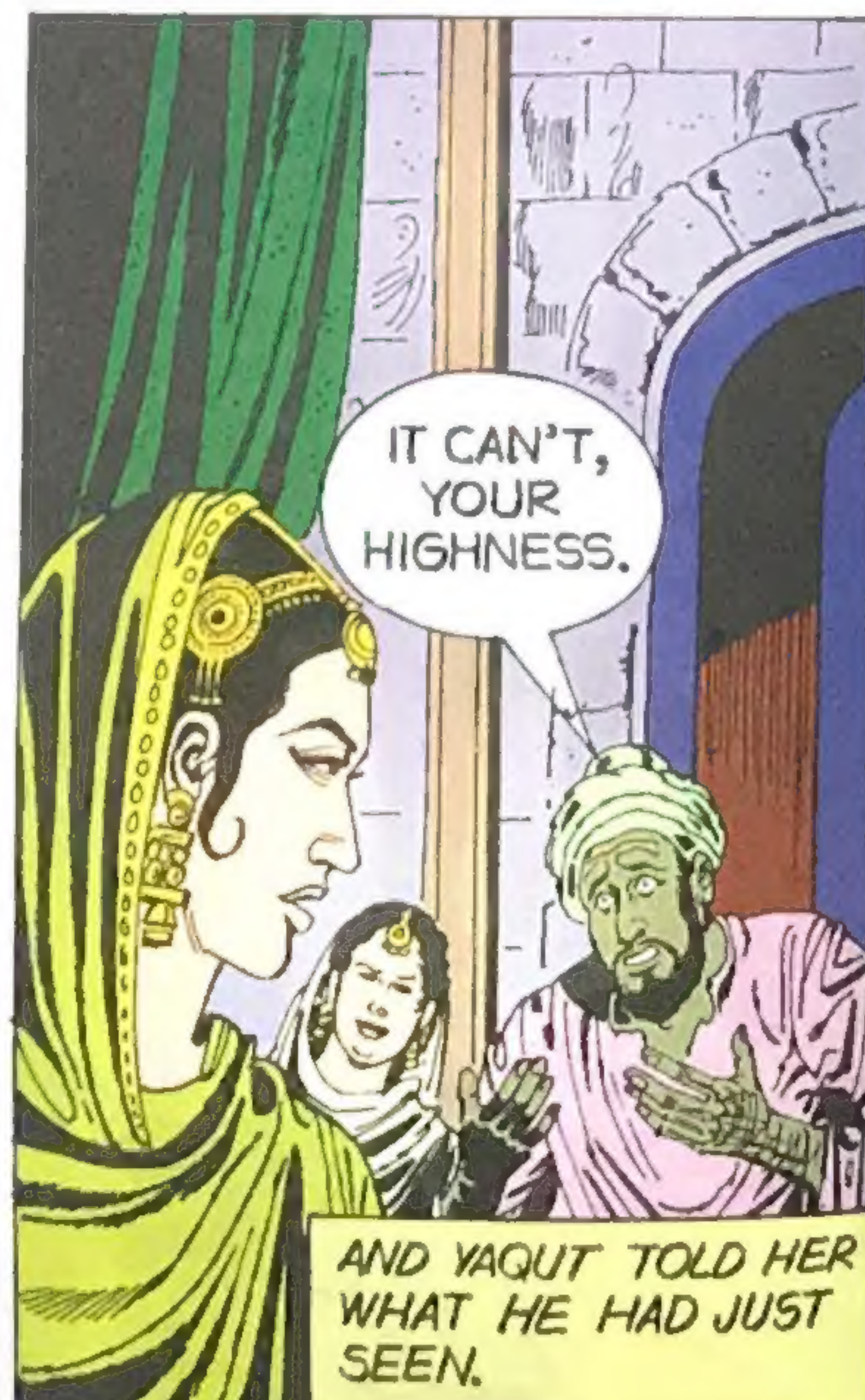
I HEREBY PROCLAIM YAMIN-UD-DAULAH RUKNUDDIN THE SULTAN OF DELHI.

LONG LIVE SULTAN RUKNUDDIN!



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BUT AS THE HORSE WAS ABOUT TO JUMP THE FENCE, RAZIA SUDDENLY REINED HIM IN AND TURNED TO NIZAM-UL-MULK —

I REQUEST YOU TO EXAMINE THAT SPOT.



AND HE WALKED TO THE SPOT.



JUST THEN SULTAN RUKNUDDIN APPEARED.

WHY THIS COMMOTION?

THE QUEEN MOTHER HIRED THESE MEN TO KILL ME. I BESEECH YOU, THE SULTAN, THAT THE GUILTY BE PUNISHED.

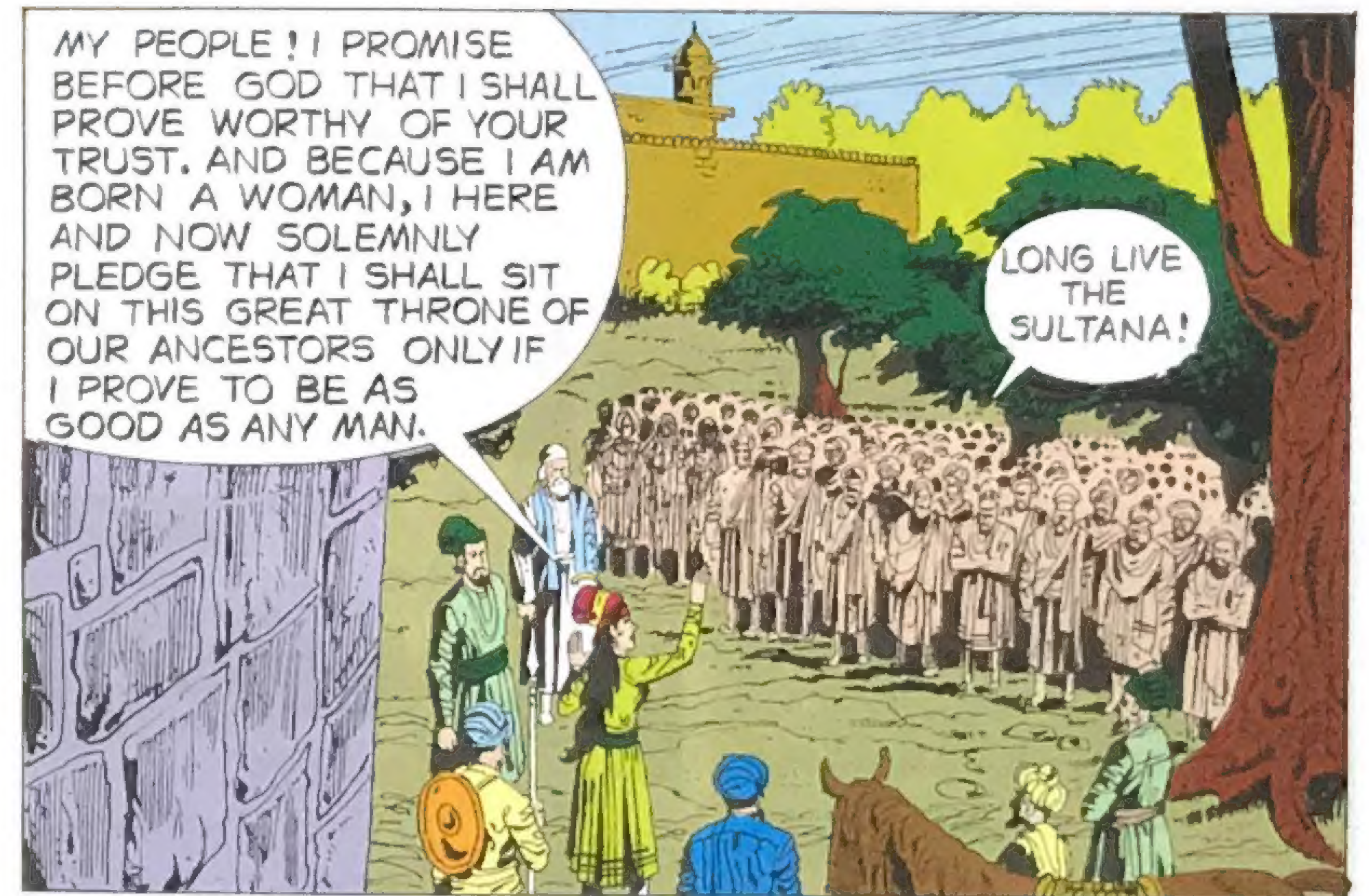


THE QUEEN MOTHER PLOTTING TO KILL YOU? IMPOSSIBLE!! I'LL HAVE YOU PUT TO DEATH FOR PLOTTING AGAINST ME!





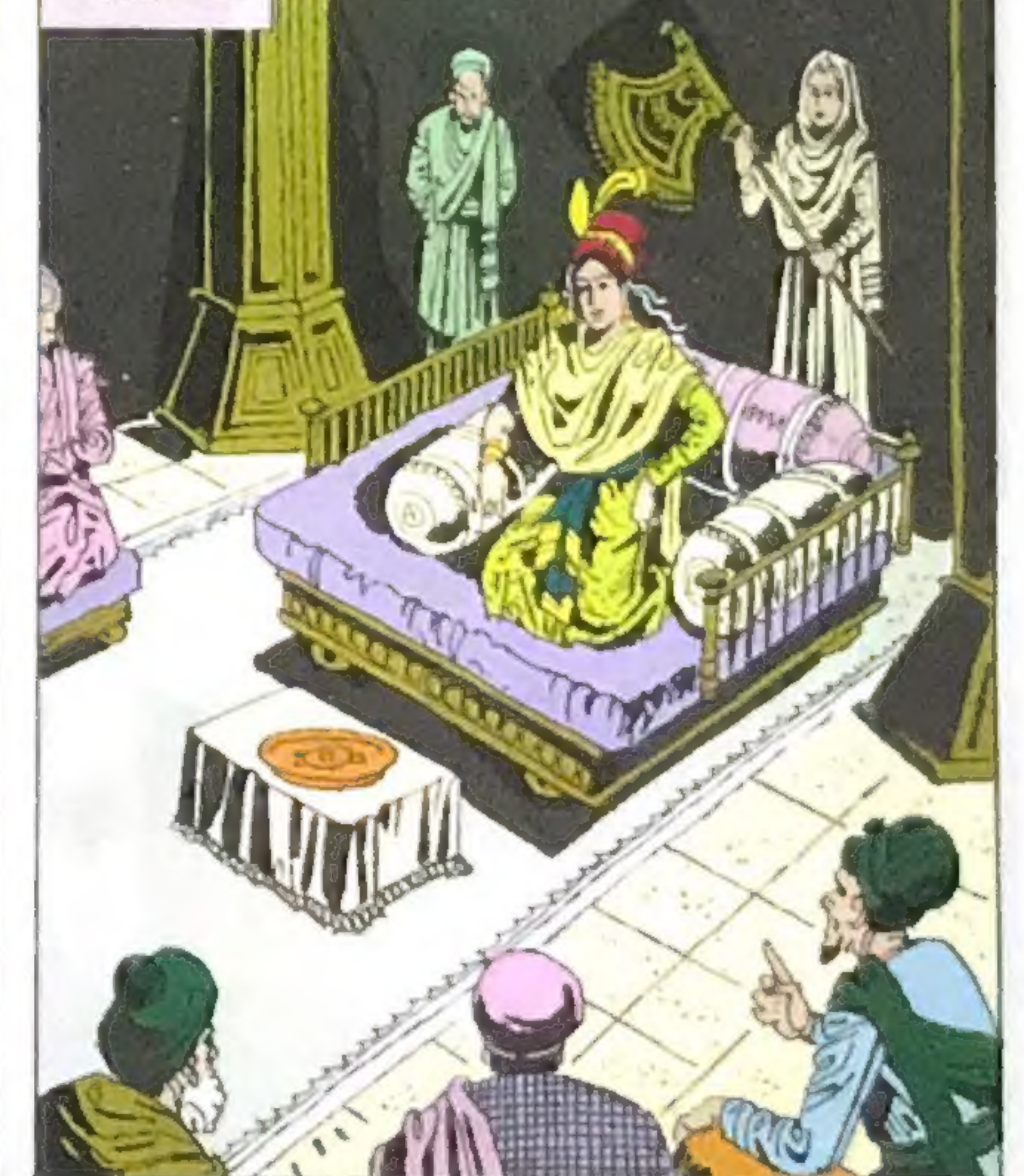
SUDDENLY, A SAINTLY FIGURE CAME FORWARD.



RAZIA DRESSED AND ACTED LIKE A KING. SHE HAD COINS STRUCK IN HER NAME...



...AND HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH THE FORTY AMIRS.



SHE WAS THE LEADER OF HER ARMIES.



SHE RESTORED PEACE AND ORDER IN HER KINGDOM.



SHE BUILT ROADS, PLANTED TREES...



...DUG WELLS...



...ENCOURAGED TRADE...



...DISPENSED JUSTICE...



...ESTABLISHED SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND...



...PATRONISED SCHOLARS, POETS, PAINTERS AND MUSICIANS



RAZIA APPEARED FREQUENTLY IN PUBLIC WITHOUT A VEIL.



YOUR MAJESTY, IN YOUR ILLUSTRIOUS FATHER'S TIME, YOU NEVER APPEARED THUS BEFORE THE PUBLIC. A THIN VEIL ALWAYS COVERED YOUR NOBLE FACE.

BUT IN MY FATHER'S TIME I WAS NOT THE RULER. NOW I FACE MY SUBJECTS AS THEIR SULTANA.



TRUE, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT YOU ARE A WOMAN...

TO THE PEOPLE, I AM THEIR PROTECTOR AND BENEFACITOR.



YOUR REASONS ARE STRONG, YOUR MAJESTY. BUT TONGUES WAG...

THEN STAY THEM! TELL THE AMIRS THAT MY BEHAVIOUR IS A PART OF MY FAITH.



JUST AS THE NIZAM-UL-MULK LEFT, ALTUNIA ARRIVED.

HERE COMES AN-OTHER MAN! ALTUNIA, ARE YOU ALSO PREJUDICED AGAINST ME BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN?

HOW CAN I BE? I LOVE YOU!

I AM SORRY, ALTUNIA. YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A LOYAL FRIEND AND I LOVE YOU TOO...

...BUT EVER SINCE I HAVE BECOME QUEEN, I AM DISTURBED BY THE ATTITUDE OF MY AMIRS.

HAS SOMEBODY BEEN POISONING YOUR MIND AGAINST ME?

NO ONE CAN DO THAT. WE HAVE BEEN SUCH GOOD FRIENDS SINCE CHILDHOOD. HOW I WISH MY OTHER AMIRS WERE LIKE YOU!

ONE DAY, AT COURT-

I FEEL, THE JAZIAH* SHOULD BE ABOLISHED.

YOUR MAJESTY, THE ABOLITION OF JAZIAH WILL WEAKEN OUR AUTHORITY.

BESIDES, THE TAX IS A REMINDER TO OUR HINDU SUBJECTS THAT WE ARE THEIR RULERS.

MUST WE FORCE SUCH HUMILIATION ON THEM?

IT HAS CONVERTED MANY TO OUR FAITH, BESIDES BEING A SOURCE OF REVENUE, YOUR MAJESTY.

PERHAPS THEY EMBRACED ISLAM OUT OF FEAR.

I WANT ALL MY SUBJECTS TO BE AFFECTIONATE AND LOYAL TO THE THRONE. THAT IS WHY I AM ABOLISHING THIS TAX.

SUCH AN ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE RULER SPELLS DANGER FOR ISLAM.

SOME OF THE AMIRS LED BY THE NIZAM-UL-MULK PLOTTED TO OVERTHROW RAZIA.

NOW IS THE TIME TO STRIKE!

BUT THE LOYAL ALTUNIA WARNED HER OF IT IN TIME.

YOUR MAJESTY, I MUST WARN YOU! I HAVE HEARD SOME AMIRS ARE PLOTTING AGAINST YOU.

INSTRUCT OUR SPIES TO SPREAD RUMOURS THAT THE NIZAM-UL-MULK IS NEGOTIATING SECRETLY WITH ME.

THE RUSE WORKED.

DON'T BELIEVE A WORD THAT WILY NIZAM-UL-MULK SAYS AGAINST RAZIA. HE IS REALLY HER STOOGES.

THE AMIRS BECAME SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER AND THEIR DISUNITY MADE THEM WEAK. THEY WERE SOON CAPTURED AND TRIED FOR TREACHERY.

THE NIZAM-UL-MULK FLED TO THE SIMUR HILLS WHERE HE DIED A FUGITIVE.

AS A REWARD FOR HIS LOYALTY, RAZIA MADE ALTUNIA THE GOVERNOR OF BHATINDA.

I AM HONOURED, YOUR MAJESTY.

UNDER YOU, AT LEAST THAT PART OF MY EMPIRE WILL BE IN SAFE HANDS.

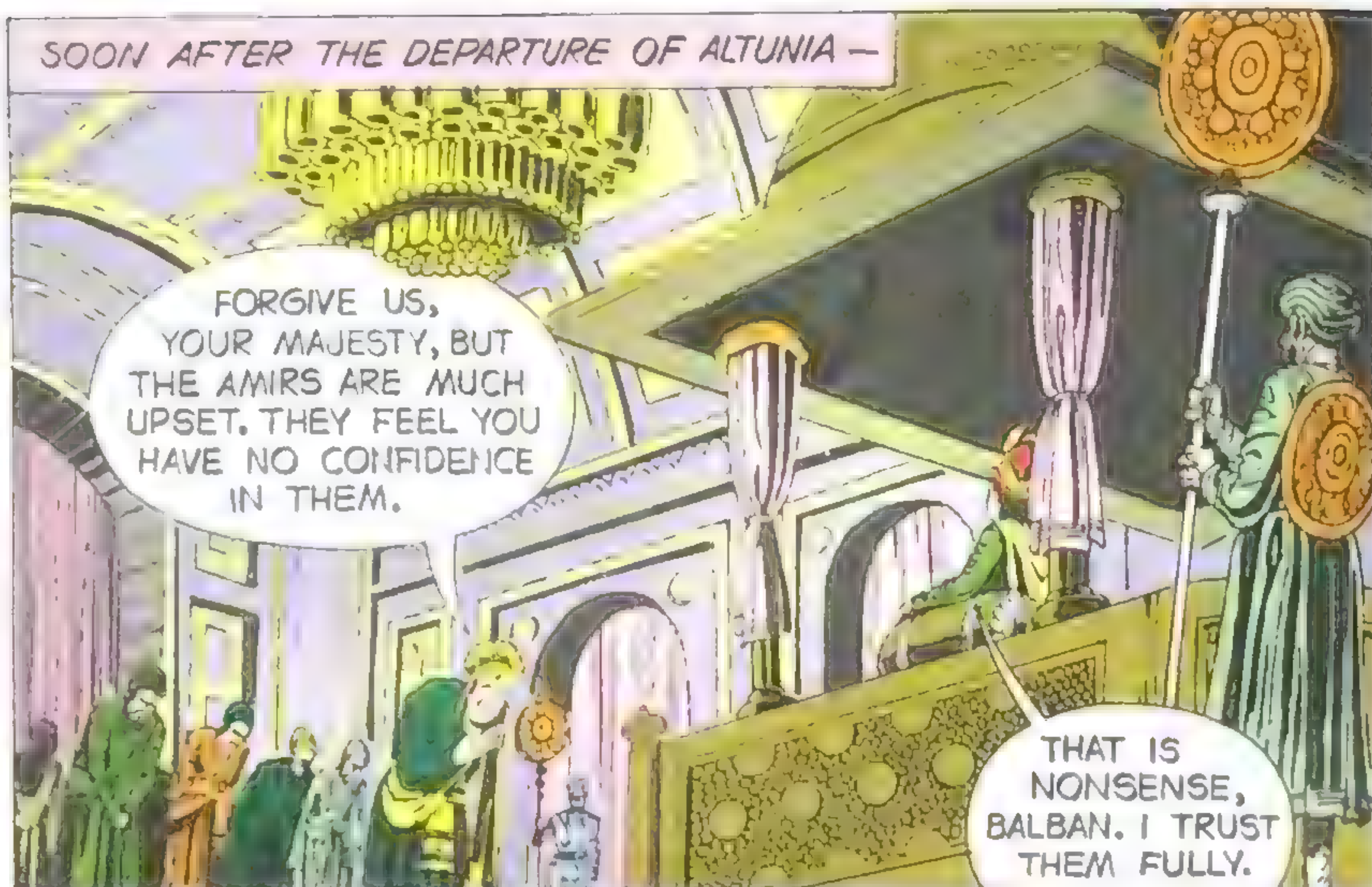
MARRY ME, RAZIA... BEFORE I LEAVE!

HOW CAN I, ALTUNIA? IT WILL MAKE THE AMIRS JEALOUS.

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR FEELINGS? WE ARE YOUNG. WE NEED EACH OTHER.

DO YOU THINK I DON'T WANT TO MARRY YOU? BUT FOR THE PRESENT I MUST CONCENTRATE ON THE AFFAIRS OF STATE.

SOON AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF ALTUNIA —



FORGIVE US, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT THE AMIRS ARE MUCH UPSET. THEY FEEL YOU HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THEM.

THAT IS NONSENSE, BALBAN. I TRUST THEM FULLY.



YOUR MAJESTY, WHAT IS TROUBLING US IS THE APPOINTMENT OF THE ABYSSINIAN JAMAL-UD-DIN YAQUT, AS AMIRUL UMRA.* IS THERE NO TURK WORTHY OF THIS HIGH POST?

OF COURSE, THERE ARE MANY AMONG MY AMIRS. BUT YAQUT IS EQUALLY COMPETENT AND TRUST-WORTHY. HE DESERVES RECOGNITION.



BUT HE IS NOT A TURK...

OUR QURAN SAYS ALL MUSLIMS ARE BROTHERS.

* CHIEF OF NOBLES.

LATER —



WE MUST CHECK HER NOW, OR WE SHALL LOSE ALL POWER.

BUT HOW? SHE IS BOTH ABLE AND POPULAR. THE PEOPLE LOVE HER.



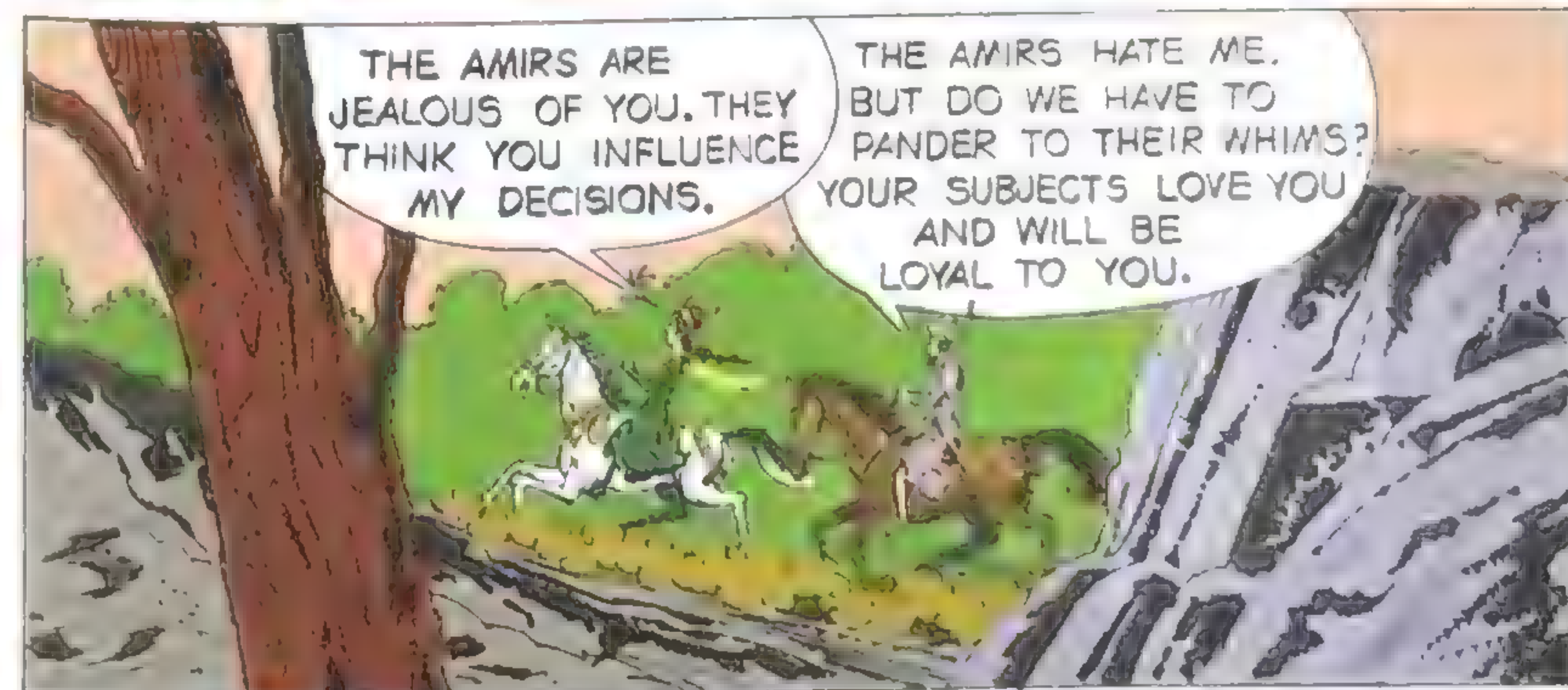
WE MUST FIND A WAY.



MEANWHILE —

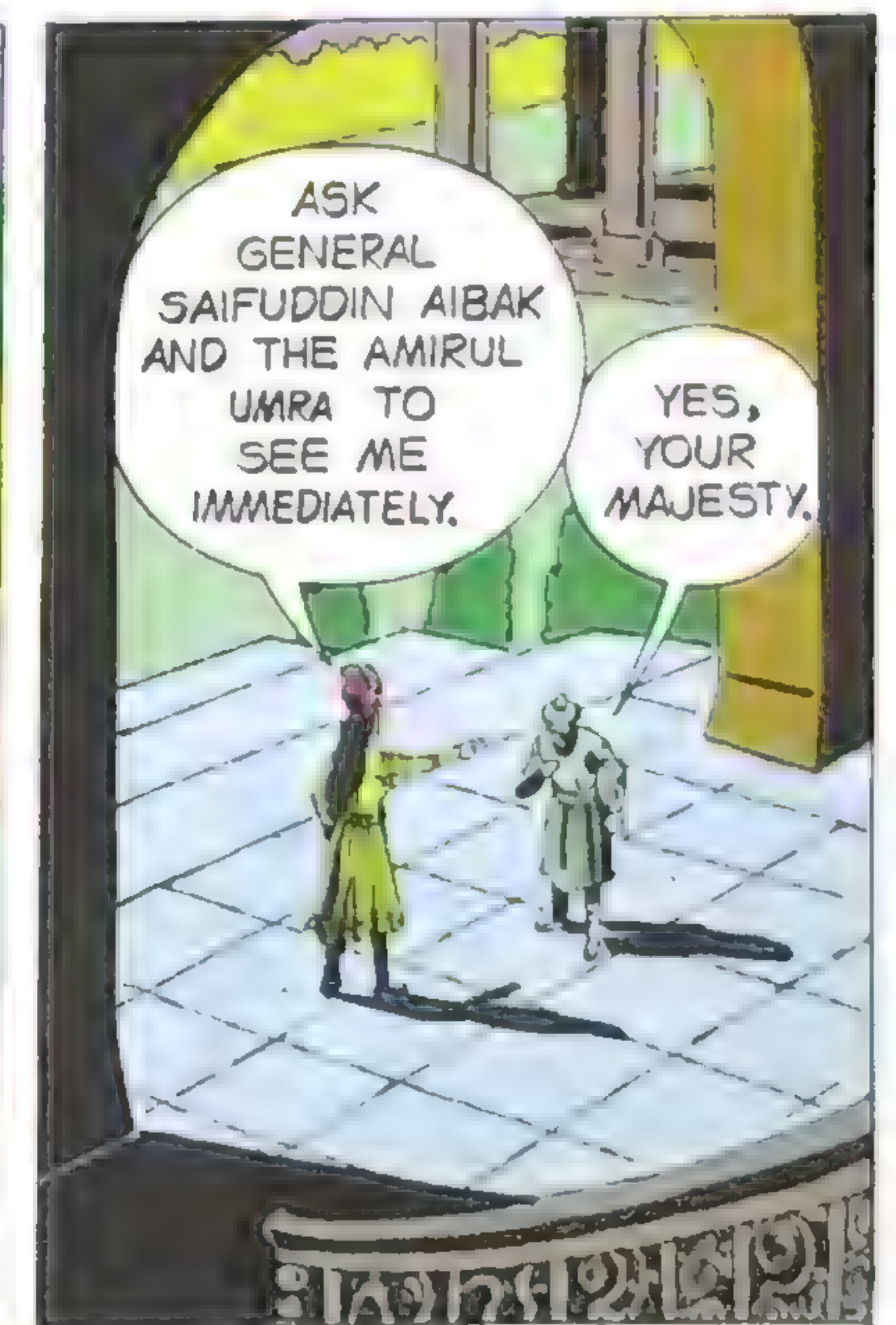
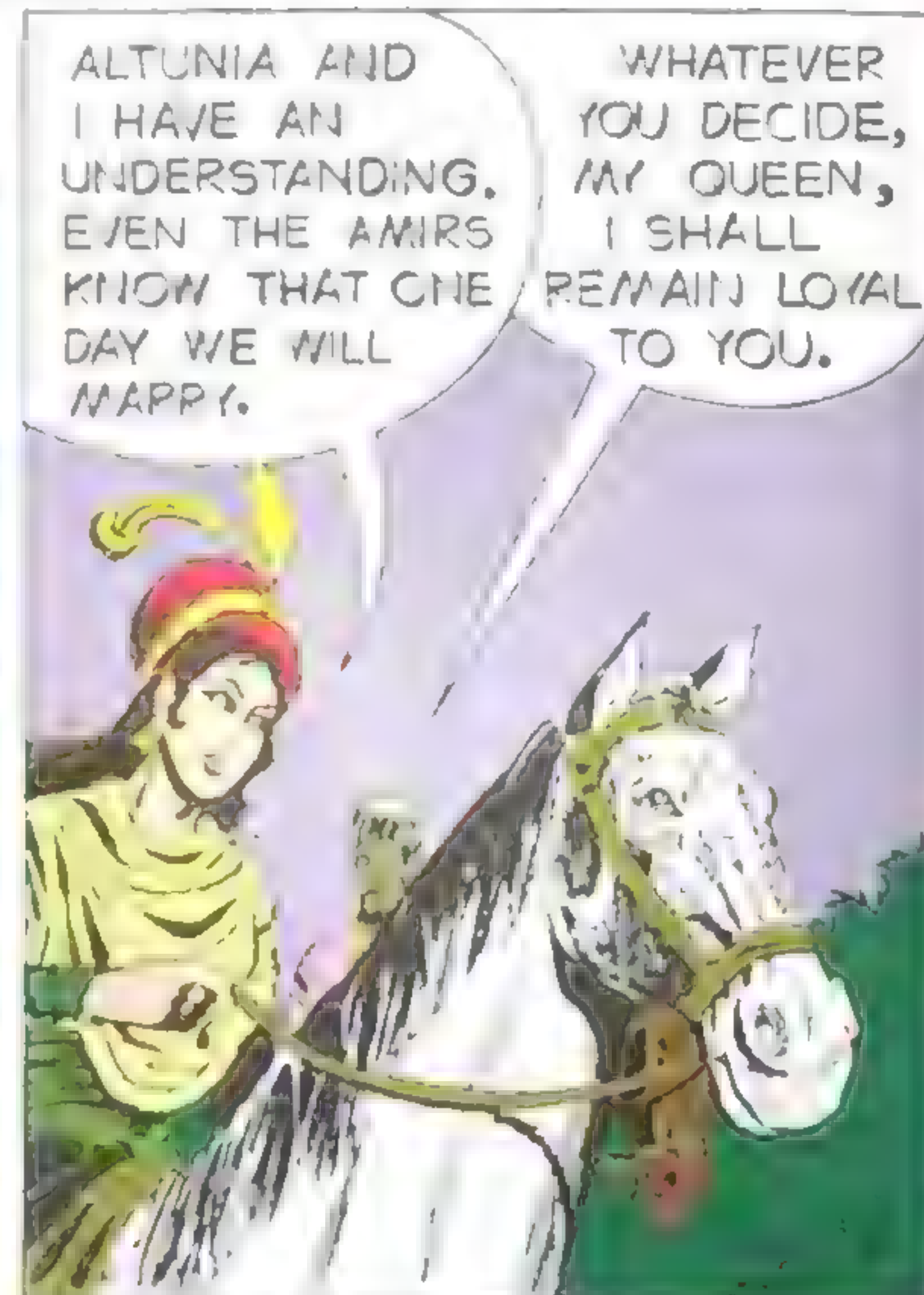
YAQUT, SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOUR ABLE SUPPORT.

MY LIFE IS AT YOUR COMMAND, NOBLE LADY.

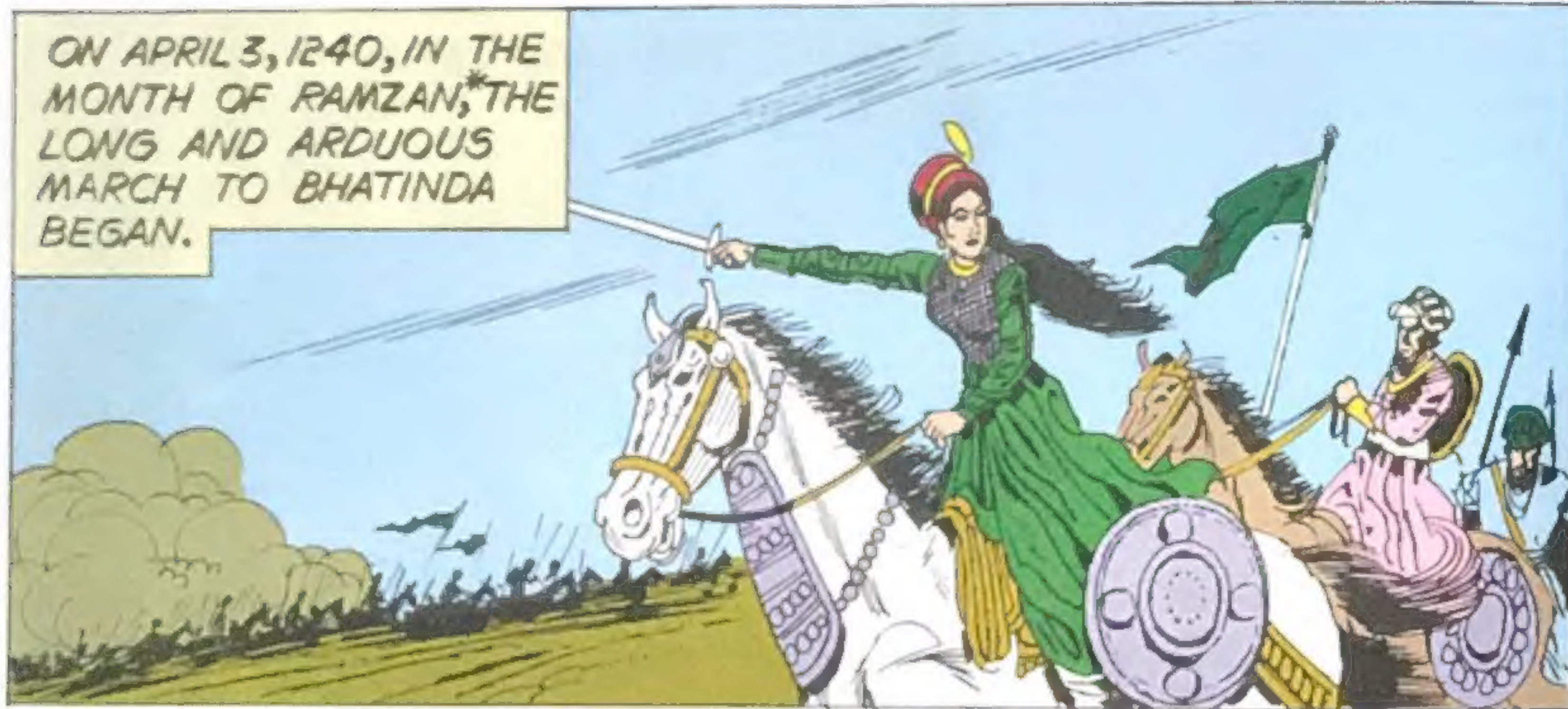


THE AMIRS ARE JEALOUS OF YOU. THEY THINK YOU INFLUENCE MY DECISIONS.

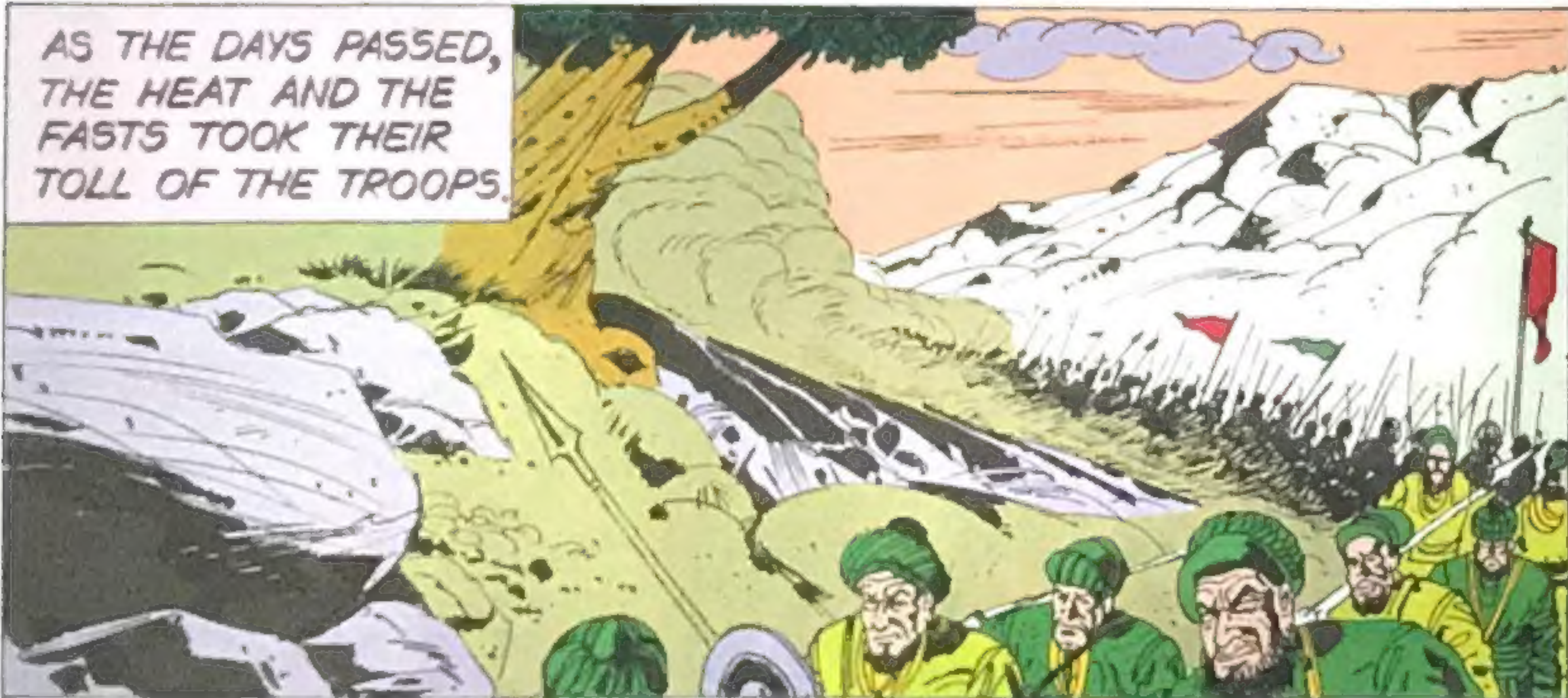
THE AMIRS HATE ME. BUT DO WE HAVE TO PANDER TO THEIR WHIMS? YOUR SUBJECTS LOVE YOU AND WILL BE LOYAL TO YOU.



ON APRIL 3, 1240, IN THE MONTH OF RAMZAN, THE LONG AND ARDUOUS MARCH TO BHATINDA BEGAN.



AS THE DAYS PASSED, THE HEAT AND THE FASTS TOOK THEIR TOLL OF THE TROOPS.

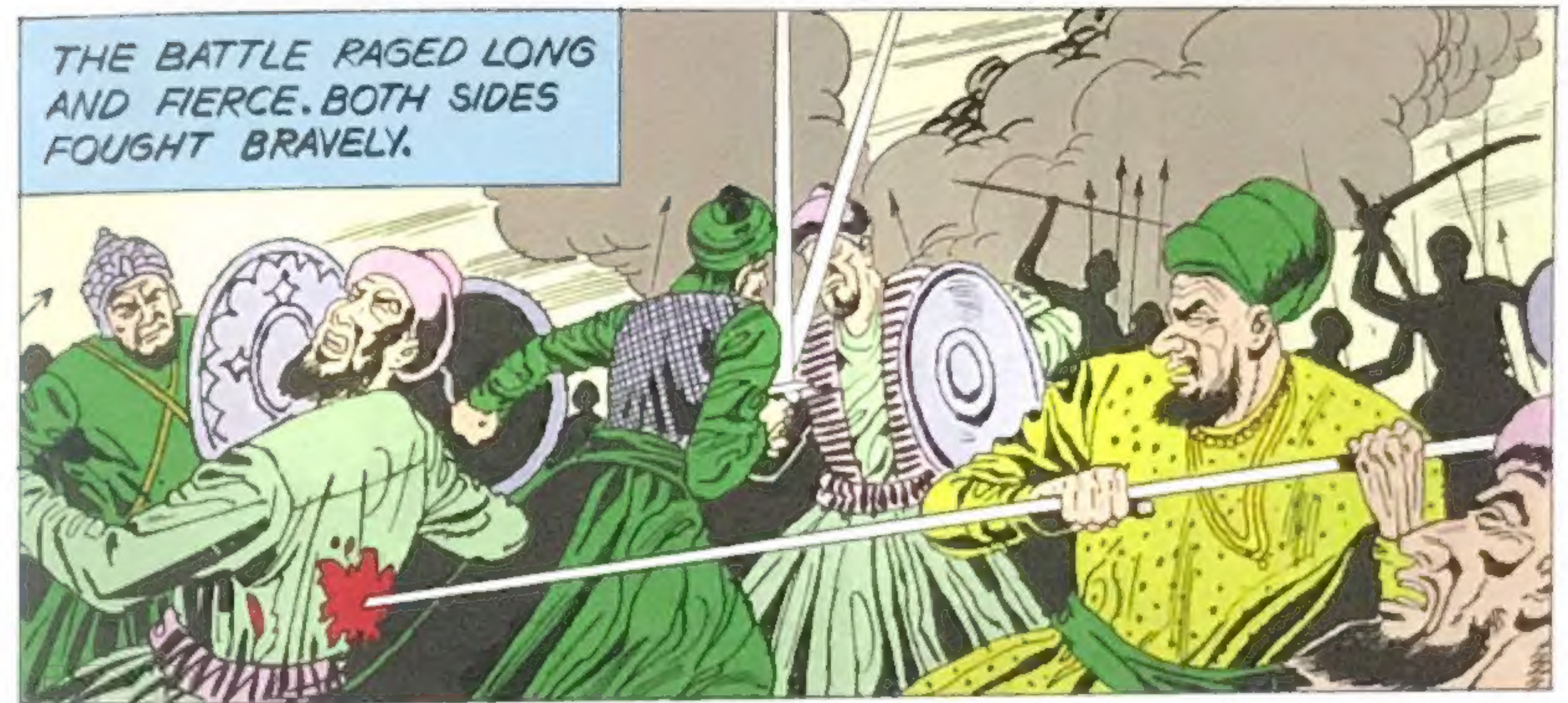


WEARY AND LOW IN SPIRIT, THEY REACHED BHATINDA TO FIGHT ALTUNIA'S FRESH, WELL-EQUIPPED TROOPS.

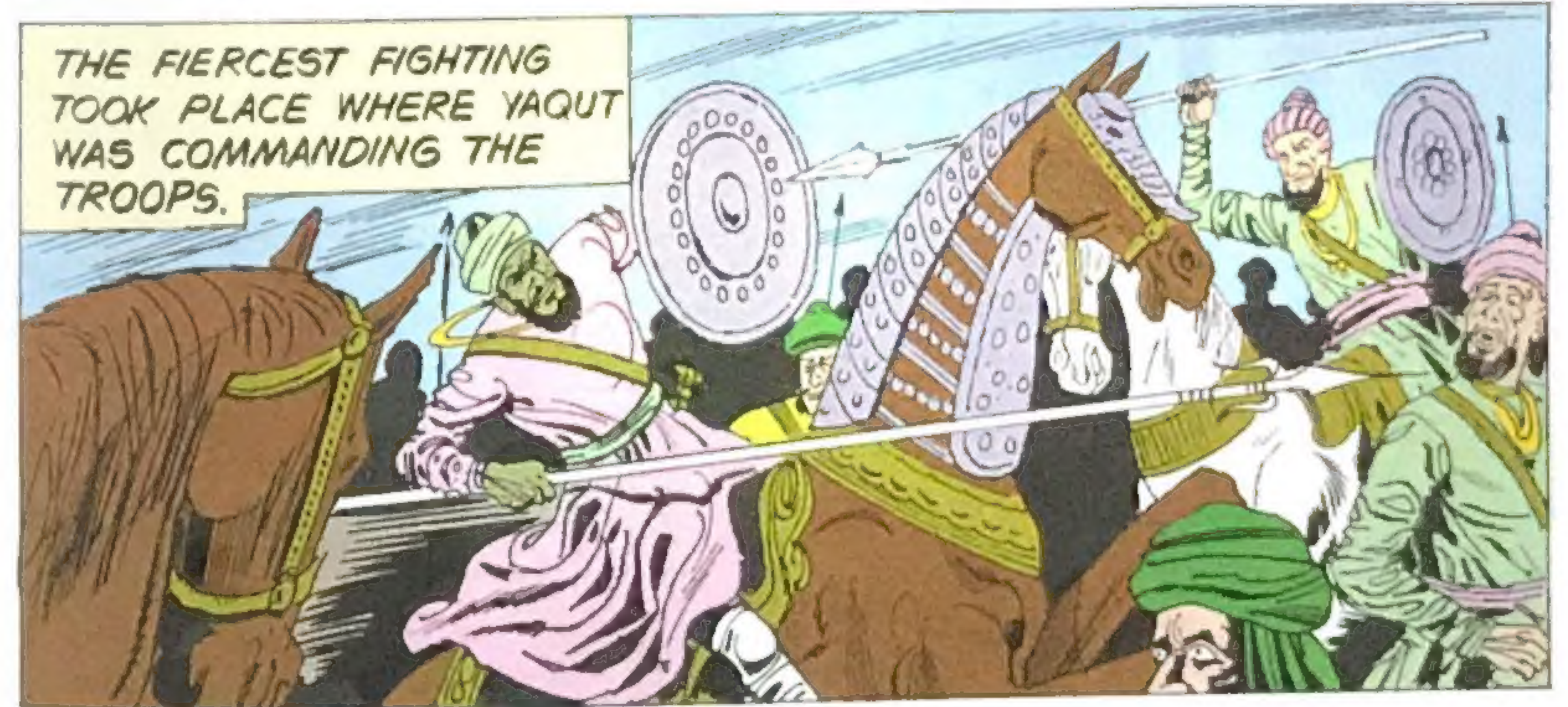


* THROUGHOUT THIS MONTH, MUSLIMS FAST FROM DAWN TO DUSK, WITHOUT DRINKING EVEN WATER.

THE BATTLE RAGED LONG AND FIERCE. BOTH SIDES FOUGHT BRAVELY.



THE FIERCEST FIGHTING TOOK PLACE WHERE YAQUT WAS COMMANDING THE TROOPS.



YAQUT'S FORCES WERE HOPELESSLY OUTNUMBERED.

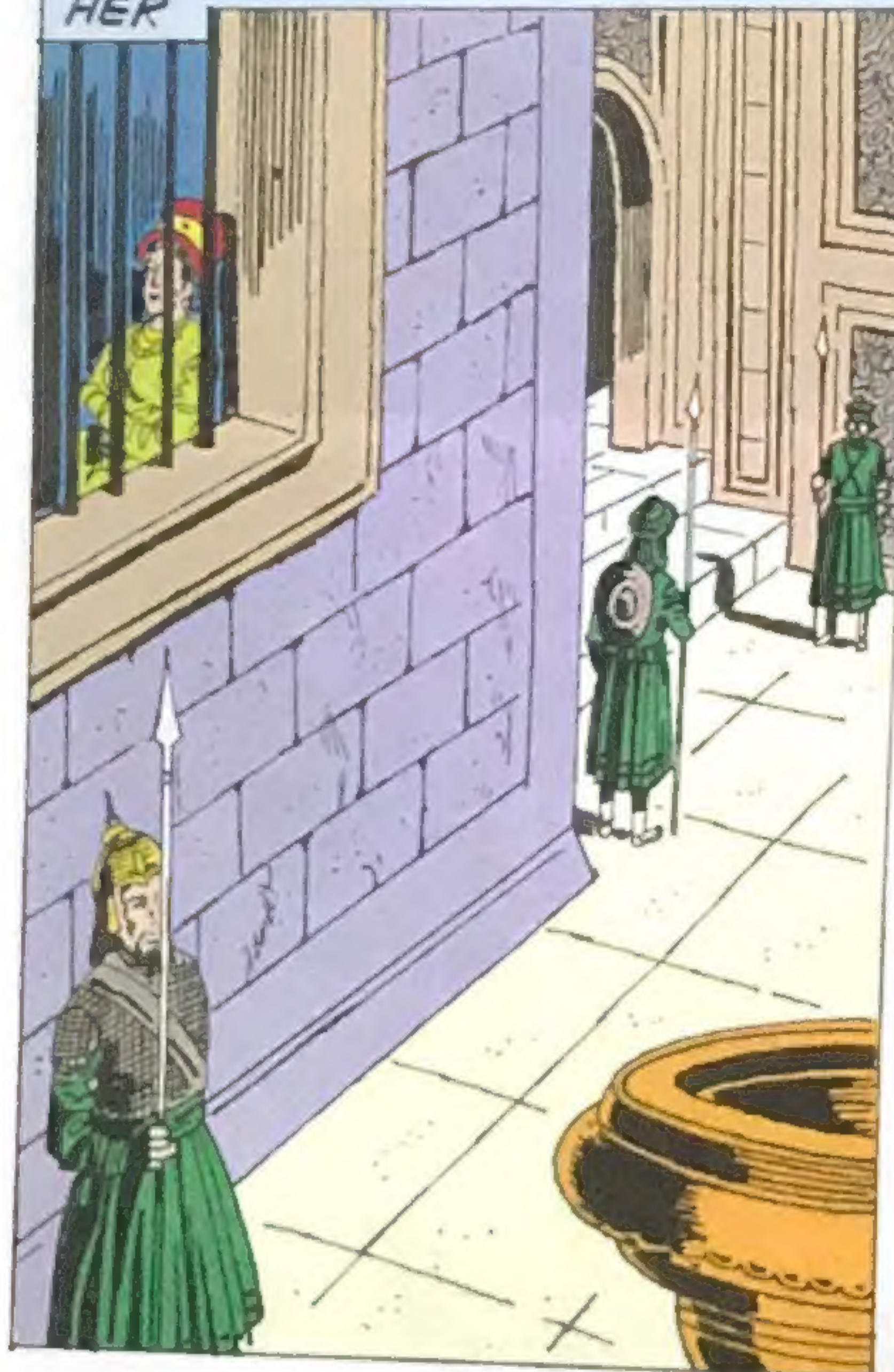


DIE, ENEMY OF ALTUNIA!

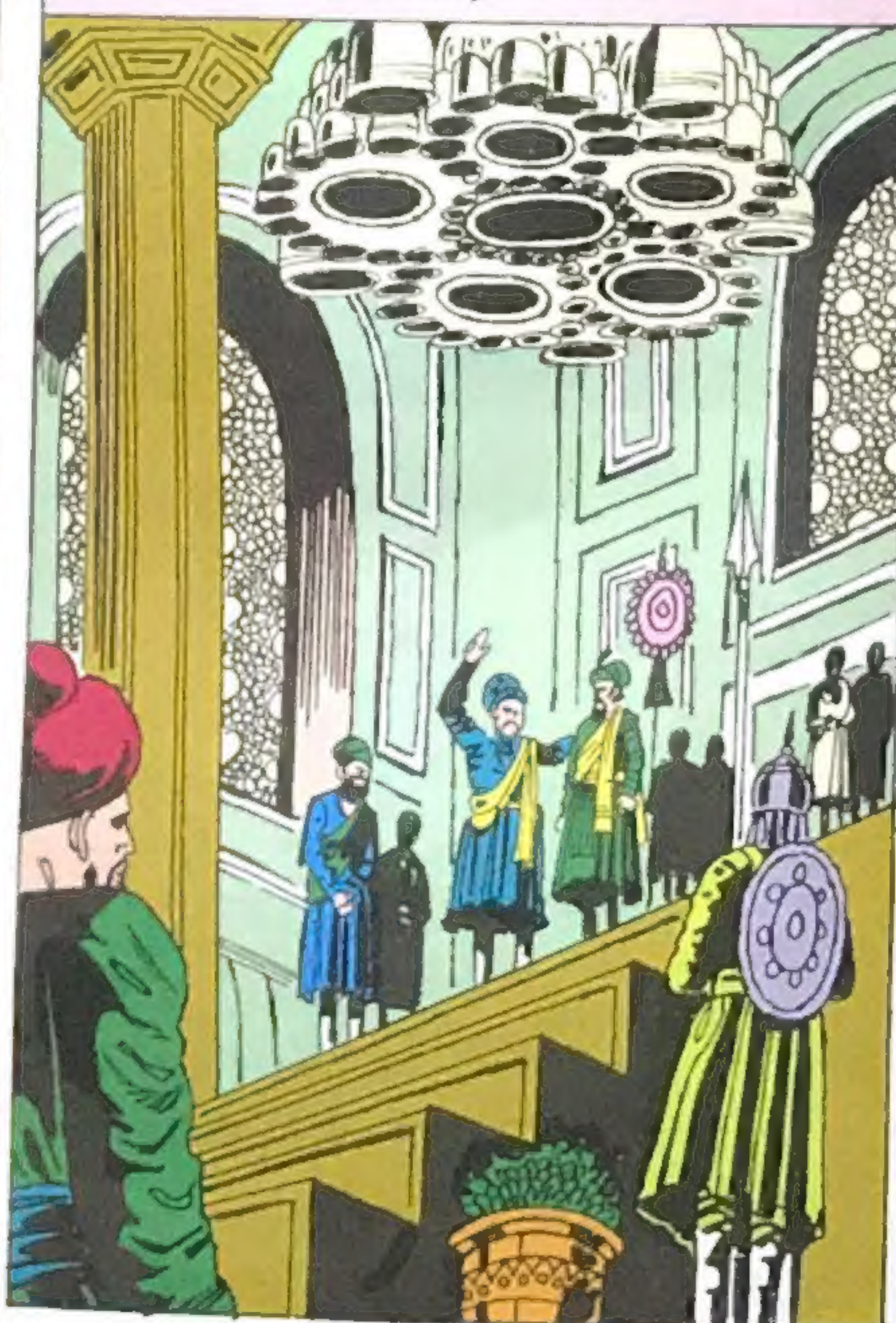
WITH YAQUT KILLED, RAZIA'S PANIC-STRICKEN TROOPS SURRENDERED.



RAZIA WAS CAPTURED AND MADE A PRISONER OF ALTUNIA, THE MAN WHO HAD DECLARED HE LOVED HER



AT DELHI, ON RAZIA'S DEFEAT, THE FORTY AMIRS PROCLAIMED HER HALF-BROTHER BEHRAM, SULTAN.



AND AT BHATINDA, AS THE WEEKS PASSED, ALTUNIA UNDERSTOOD.



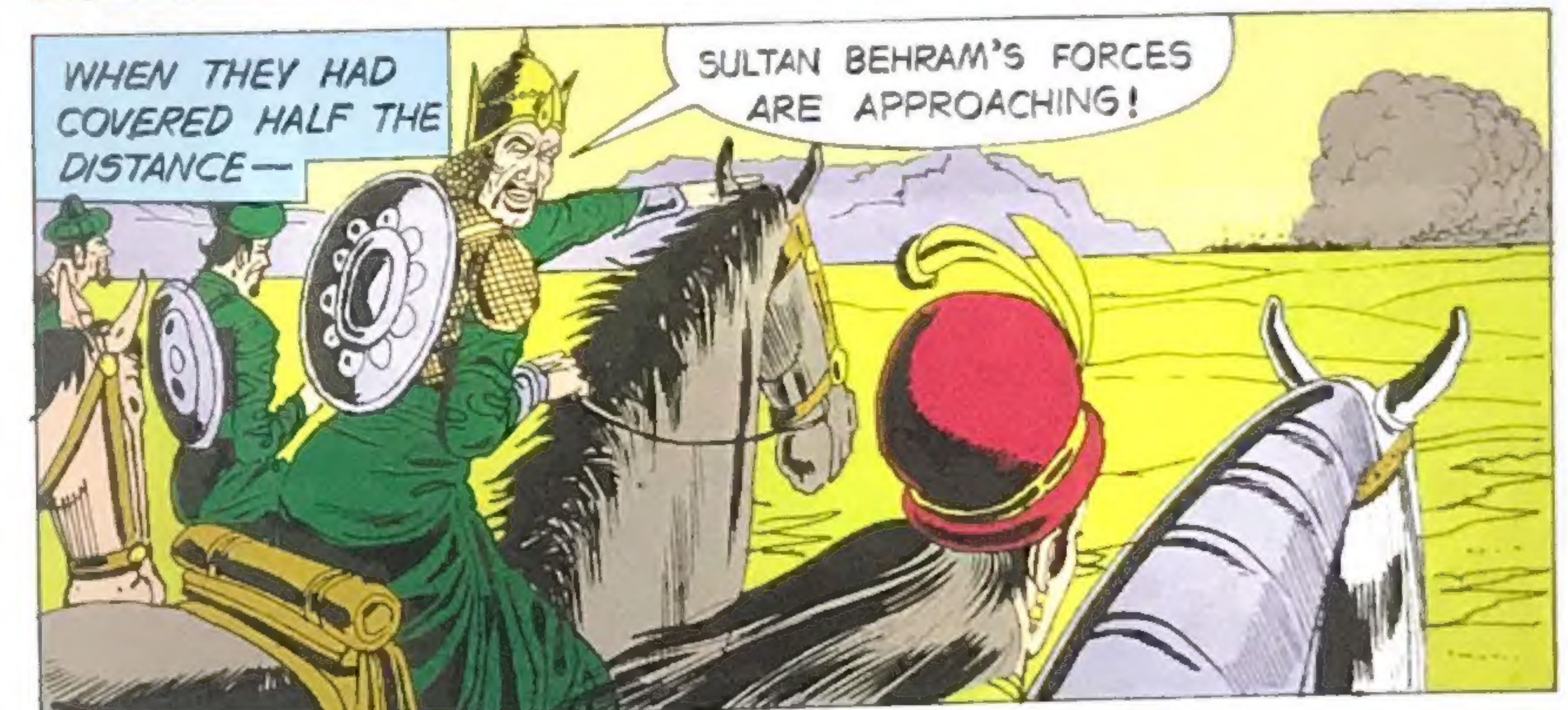
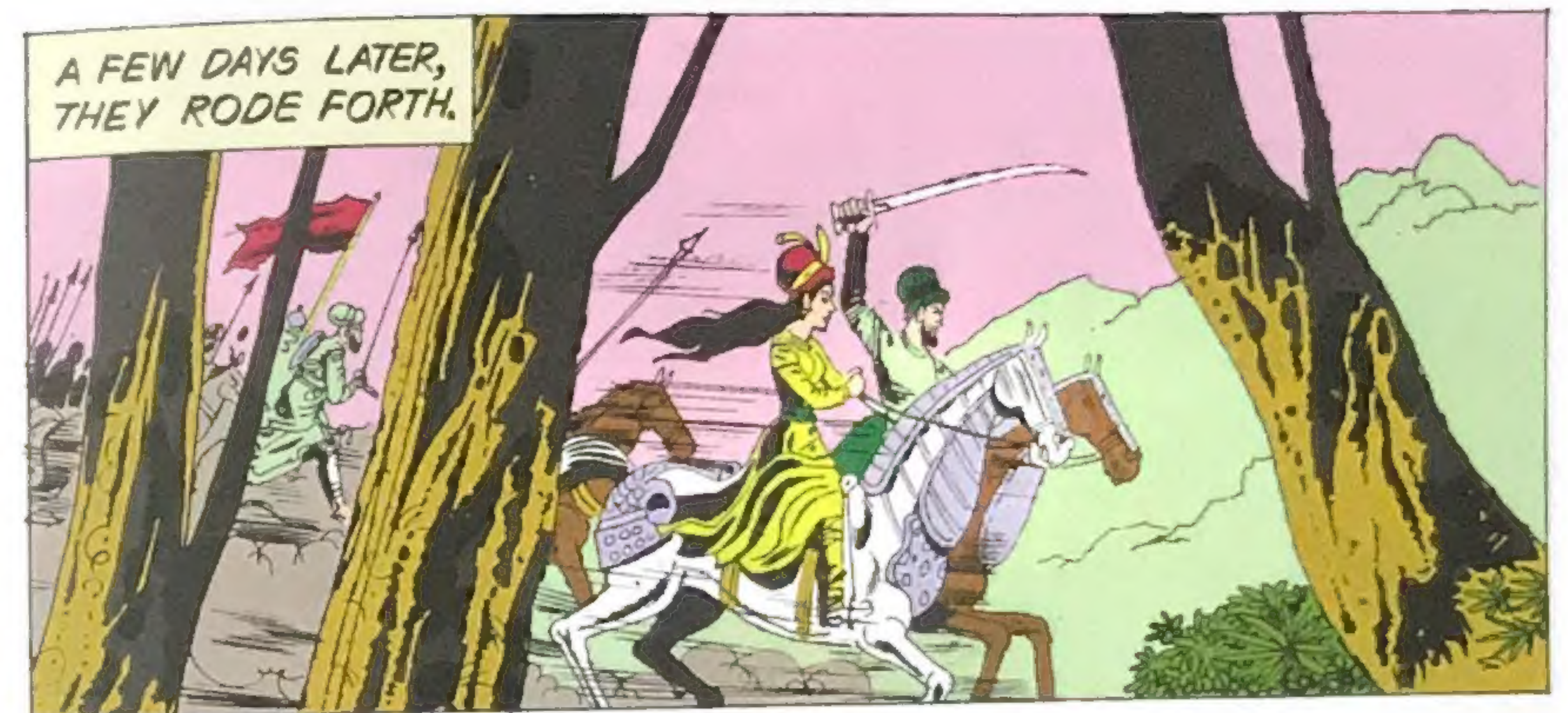
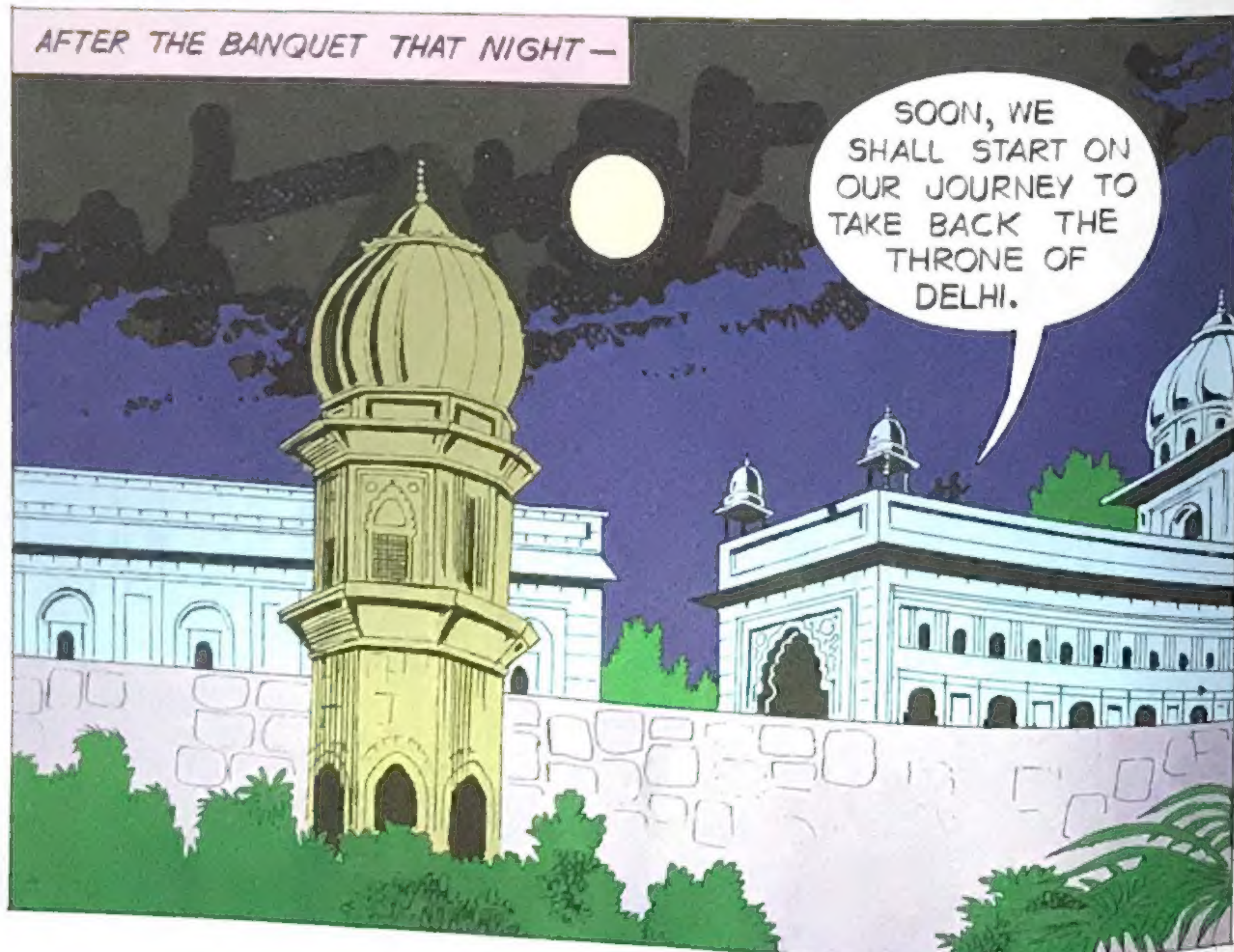
I WAS A JEALOUS FOOL TO HAVE DOUBTED YOUR LOVE! FORGIVE ME, RAZIA.



LET US FORGET THE PAST AND START A NEW LIFE TOGETHER. I LOVE YOU SO!



RAZIA, MY BELOVED! MINE AT LAST!



BUT BEHRAM'S FORCES, MORE IN NUMBER AND BETTER EQUIPPED, GRADUALLY STARTED GAINING OVER THE TROOPS OF RAZIA AND ALTUNIA.



IN THE HEAT OF THE BATTLE, BEHRAM'S EMISSARY APPROACHED ALTUNIA.

SURRENDER, YOUR EXCELLENCY! SULTAN BEHRAM GRANTS YOU FULL PARDON!



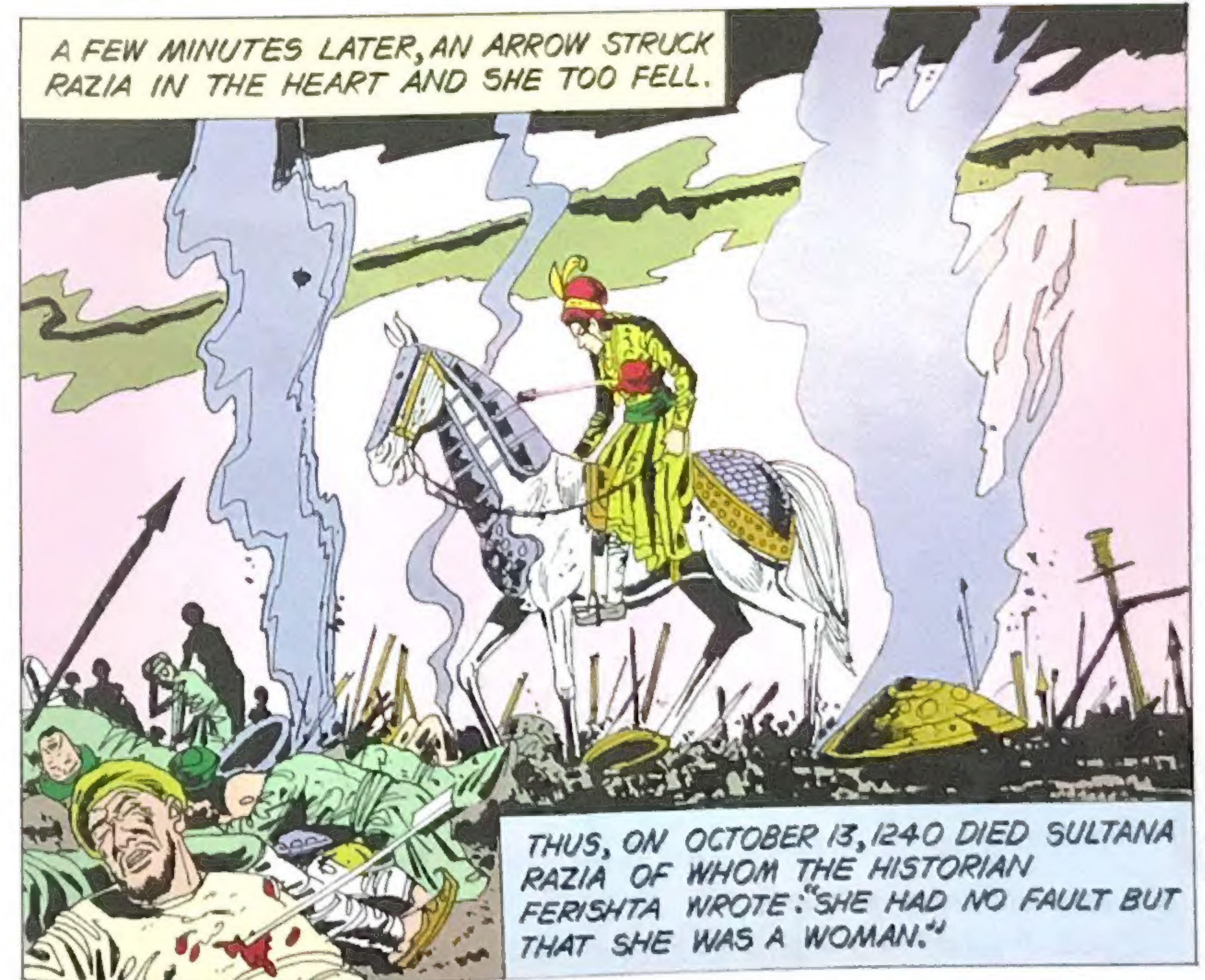
I WOULD RATHER DIE FOR RAZIA THAN LIVE FOR THE SULTAN.



ALTUNIA! ALTUNIA!



A FEW MINUTES LATER, AN ARROW STRUCK RAZIA IN THE HEART AND SHE TOO FELL.



THUS, ON OCTOBER 13, 1240 DIED SULTANA RAZIA OF WHOM THE HISTORIAN FERISHTA WROTE: "SHE HAD NO FAULT BUT THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN."